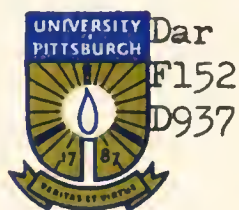


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*John Neilson, Esq.^r
With the respects of
The Author*

MR DUPONCEAU'S


HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

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AN

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
LANDING OF WILLIAM PENN,

24 OCTOBER 1832:

BEING THE

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF

THAT EVENT.

BY

PETER STEPHEN DUPONCEAU, LL.D.

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

Philadelphia:

JAMES KAY, JUN. & CO.—4 MINOR STREET.

1832.

At a meeting of the Society for the Commemoration of the
Landing of William Penn, held October 24, 1832,

Resolved, unanimously, that the thanks of the Society be
presented to Mr Duponceau, for his able and eloquent oration
delivered this day, and that he be requested to furnish a copy
for publication.

Extract from the minutes.

WM. MASON WALMSLEY, *Secretary*.

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1-24-38

DISCOURSE.

MR PRESIDENT—GENTLEMEN.

This day completes the third, and begins the fourth half century since the great event took place which our Society has been instituted to commemorate. One hundred and fifty years have elapsed from the first landing of our illustrious founder on these shores. If it is pleasing to us, on every annual return of this memorable day, to meet together to indulge in the recollections of former times, it must be particularly so at one of those great epochs which nature seems to have pointed out as land marks amidst the rapid course of time, as baiting places as it were, whence we may look back on the road we have travelled, and forward to that which lies before us. Such is the period of fifty years, which, from the earliest times, has been hallowed among the nations of the earth. By divine institution, every fiftieth year was appointed for a jubilee among the chosen people; and an ancient and widely extended Christian church has consecrated the same period to a similar purpose. Among the Germans, to this day, every married couple who have been fortunate enough to live together in wedlock fifty years, celebrate their nuptials once more with solemn pomp, and that is called their *golden wedding*, or in their more energetic language, their *golden great day*.^{*} Why then shall we not have also our *golden epoch*,

^{*} At the end of twenty-five years after their nuptials, married couples in Germany celebrate what is called their *silver wedding* (die silberne Hochzeit)

and celebrate it with joy and triumph, when, in the review of past times and their comparison with those in which we now live, we have so much cause for exultation, and such a fruitful theme for deep reflection in considering the glorious effects of liberty and self-government? And if we look forward to the future, what admirable prospects present themselves to our view, provided we remain true to ourselves, and do not abandon the path that we have so successfully trod?

That this jubilee was not celebrated at an earlier time, is not to be ascribed to the carelessness or ingratitude of the sons of Penn. When the fiftieth anniversary occurred for the first time, in 1732, not many years had elapsed since the death of the great founder, and the feelings that it excited were rather those of sorrow than of rejoicing, nor did the simplicity of the manners of those times comport with such celebrations. At the end of the next half century, in 1782, the country was contending against Great Britain for its national existence; every nerve was strained, and every mind was occupied with the great contest, and all thoughts of the past gave way to the immense concern that was felt for the future. This, then, is the first time, when, free from sorrow, free from wars, and sitting under our own vine and our own fig tree, in the enjoyment of the greatest degree of freedom and happiness that was ever the lot of humanity, we may give way to all the feelings which the recurrence of this day is calculated to excite, and we may hope that our descendants will celebrate it in like manner for many and many centuries and half centuries yet to come, while the name of Pennsylvania shall last and remain in honour amongst nations.

To our society it will specially belong worthily to celebrate this glorious event. It is not one of those ephemeral associations which one day sees arise, and the next day disappear. It has not been instituted to obtain some momentary *eclat*, or to serve some temporary purpose. It was intended from the

—at the end of fifty years they have the *golden wedding* (die goldne Hochzeit). Some kind of marriage ceremony is performed on those occasions, and the nuptial festivities take place as on the day of marriage.

beginning to be perpetual, and to last as long as the fame of him whom we are assembled to commemorate. And so it is understood, not only by us and by our fellow-citizens in Pennsylvania, but by all, and in the remotest parts of this union. History has already inscribed our institution on the page designed to perpetuate the memory of interesting events. In Mr Holmes's American Annals, a work well deserving to be recommended to every American who wishes to take a clear view of the history of his country, the establishment of our society is introduced among the memorable events of the period in which it was formed ; so that it has become our sacred duty not to suffer it to sink into oblivion. Fifty years hence, therefore, the duty which you have imposed upon me will devolve on one of our successors, who will no doubt look back on our humble beginnings, and appreciate the spirit and the zeal that induced us to associate for this laudable purpose.

I feel all the weight of that duty ; I am conscious that you might have chosen many from among you much more fitted than I am to perform this honourable task ; but it is too late to look back, and I must endeavour to let zeal supply, if possible, the deficiency of talent.

On this occasion I have presumed that it would not be unpleasing to you to have exhibited to your view successive sketches of the situation of our country at the end of every period of fifty years from the era that we commemorate, passing slightly over the intermediate spaces. The striking contrasts that these pictures will present, will enable you to perceive, in all their grandeur, the gigantic strides which Pennsylvania and the United States, whose fortunes are now inseparable, have made in the short period of one hundred and fifty years. Like the philosopher of Cnossus, or our own Epimenides,* whose adventures are recorded in the Sketch

* Epimenides was a Greek Philosopher, born at Cnossus in the island of Candia. It is related of him, that having descended into a cave, he there fell asleep, and did not awake until after twenty-seven years, when, returning home, he knew nobody, and nobody remembered him. This story probably gave rise to the entertaining tale of Rip Van Winkle, in the Sketch Book.

Book, we shall realize Franklin's wish* to awake at the end of every half century, and enjoy with wonder and delight the changes of scene that we shall see every where around us.

I would begin with the era that we celebrate, the landing of William Penn on the 24th of October 1682; but perhaps it may not be amiss to look back a little farther, that we may the better understand the situation in which our great law-giver found this country on his arrival, from whence afterwards we shall proceed by half centuries to the present day.

One hundred years before that memorable era, the whole of this continent, north of Mexico, was in the undisturbed possession of the aborigines of the country. The French traded to Canada, but had yet attempted no settlement there. The Newfoundland fishery was carried on with vigour by the European nations inhabiting the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. But, saving the Spanish fort of St Augustine and two or three scattering posts in Florida, the whole country was a wilderness. It did not remain so long: a considerable change was produced in the course of half a century.

We are now in 1632, fifty years before the arrival of William Penn, and two hundred years from the present time. Different scenes are beginning to strike our eyes. We see the English, the French, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the Swedes, all striving to obtain a settlement on this northern continent. All Europe, except the country that gave him birth, seems desirous to share in the fruits of the discovery of Columbus. What is to be the result of this struggle? Who are to be the ultimate possessors of these vast dominions? The ensuing fifty years will determine that in a great measure. But we must not anticipate; our object is to exhibit a picture of the state of the country at the present time.

Under the name of Florida, Spain claims a large undefined

* Dr Franklin, not long before his death, said that he would wish to rise again at the end of fifty years, to see the changes that would have taken place in the situation of his country. He died in 1790, so that the fifty years will have elapsed in 1840. Who can foretell what will have happened at that time, though only eight years distant from the present day?

extent of territory to the north of the Mississippi, whose waters have not yet been discovered. Yet, except the few positions that we have noticed, she has no settlements that show a design to colonize that fertile land. In the north, on the contrary, the French have established themselves on the St Lawrence and on the coast of Acadia. The foundations of Quebec are laid, missionaries are employed in converting the natives, and a regular trade is carried on between those infant colonies and the mother country.

But the middle ground, which, in less than a century and a half, is to burst upon the world as the thirteen United States of America, is that which is the most deserving of our attention. On the banks of James river is the colony of Virginia settled by emigrants from Great Britain. Forty-seven years have passed away since its first settlement began, but its progress has been extremely slow; at this day they are yet obliged to import their wives from England;* their population of course is scanty, and their prospects by no means encouraging. The mother country has made them two fatal presents, religious intolerance† and slavery. The former they will throw off in due time; they will struggle for a long while to get rid of the latter.

Turn now your eyes towards the north, and see two infant colonies, already exhibiting the strength, the vigour and the energy of manhood. It is but twelve years—twelve years and no more, since a sacred band of pilgrims, driven from England on account of their religious principles, landed with their wives and children on the barren rock of Plymouth. There they found a bleak shore and a barren soil, and the winter approaching—their courage was not shaken.

* Notwithstanding the population of Virginia had been augmented by a steady and rapid stream of emigration since 1624, still it appears, by a regulation of the council, that this *interesting object of trade* was still continued (in 1632).—Burk's History of Virginia, Vol. II. p. 36.

† In the year 1629, a strict conformity to the canons of the church was enjoined under severe penalties. The arbitrary decrees of the court of high commission had always been acknowledged as the guide to religious regulations in the colony. Ibid, p. 28.

In the midst of difficulties capable of appalling the stoutest hearts, they persevered, they organized their civil, religious and military governments, defended themselves against hostile savages, and in the short space of twelve years from their first landing, now, in 1632, not only their original settlement, the colony of Plymouth, is in a flourishing state, but they have founded another, that of Massachusetts Bay, and her proud capital, Boston, is already the seat of her separate government; they have extended the benefits of education to *every child* in the colony, and only six years afterwards, Harvard University will be founded. The part of the country they inhabit, which before was known by the name of North Virginia, is now called New England, which has become the generic name by which the British possessions in America are, and for a long time will be, designated by foreign nations. In two years more, another colony, Rhode Island, will be founded out of the same stock.

What can have occasioned this vast difference between the comparative progress of Virginia and of New England? It is not difficult to account for it. The former was established on monarchical*, the latter on republican principles. Fortunately for New England, the mother country despised her humble beginnings, and struck, perhaps, also with a holy horror of her heretical opinions, left her to herself and her own resources, while she inflicted on Virginia her baneful protection, and directed her government, not for the interest of the colony, but her own. Yet Virginia, under all her disadvantages, will one day deserve to be called "the mother of great men."

The intermediate space between these infant colonies is yet a wilderness. The Dutch, however, have penetrated as far up the North River as the place where Albany is hereafter to stand, and erected there a fort called Fort Orange. They

* About this time (1629) the criminal code was daily enlarged by violent constructions of the English statutes, and of the powers vested in the executive by charter. Proclamations, wearing the shape of laws, but nothing of their deliberation or justice, were issued without number in the wantonness of authority. Burk's Virginia, Vol. II. p. 30.

have another on Manhattan Island, but New Amsterdam will not be laid out until the year 1656, twenty-four years after the time we are speaking of. On the east bank of the Delaware there is a Dutch fort called Fort Nassau ; and one has been erected by the Swedes on the western bank of the same river. These are only trading establishments ; no serious attempts are yet made towards permanent colonization. That will not take place until the next half century.

Thus our country still appears an immense desert, inhabited only by wandering tribes, with a few cultivated spots scattered here and there at wide distances along the margin of the ocean and the banks of large rivers. The new comers, axe in hand, are felling the trees that cover the surface of the land, while others are ploughing the virgin ground or preparing habitations for themselves and their families, or erecting fortifications against a savage enemy. What the earth does not afford is supplied them by vessels from Europe, and is paid for by tobacco in the south, in the north by furs of various kinds which they obtain by barter from the surrounding Indians. Nothing yet seems to predict the high destinies to which the country will be called in less than two centuries.

Such was the aspect of this northern continent fifty years before the landing of William Penn. Let us now shift the scene, and take a view of the state of the country at that memorable epoch.

Great events, indeed, have taken place in the course of the last half century. Two nations, at that time powerful, the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the kingdom of Sweden, have taken possession of the territory that lies between Virginia and New England, and there formed colonial establishments, which Europe recognised, and which enjoyed regular governments under the protection of their parent states. The New Netherlands on the banks of the Hudson, and New Sweden on those of the Delaware, in the short space of little more than thirty years, have risen, flourished, strutted their little hour, and finally disappeared. The Dutch conquered the Swedes, and the English subjugated both. At the

time that we speak of, Great Britain had been eighteen years in possession of the territory which those nations had occupied; and the population which they had left had quietly submitted to the government of the conquerors.

At the time of the conquest, the Dutch settlements on the Hudson, including Nassau, new Long Island and Staten Island, extended on the east side of that river to the frontier of Connecticut, and on both sides northward to the banks of the Mohawk. On Manhattan Island stood New Amsterdam, now New York, the seat of their government. Towards the west their settlements extended, in east New Jersey, to the banks of the Raritan. These settlements, of course, were scattered; but their population far exceeded that of their rival New Sweden; their commerce was active and prosperous, and it is not to be wondered at that they made an easy conquest of their Swedish neighbours. A similar reason made it impossible for them to resist the attack of Great Britain. The Dutch language is still preserved at this day in a great part of the state of New York, while in Pennsylvania and Delaware the Swedish idiom is entirely lost. I have heard that the last person who spoke it as her vernacular tongue, was an old woman who died about fifty years ago.

During the eighteen years that elapsed from the conquest, by Great Britain, of the Dutch and Swedish territories, to the time of the arrival of William Penn, an English population, partly from New England, already the *officina gentium*, some from Maryland, a new colony, which had been founded to the north of Virginia, at the beginning of the preceding half century, and the rest from the British dominions in Europe, had migrated to these parts, and settled themselves among the Dutch and Swedish inhabitants. Between the ocean and the eastern banks of the Delaware, two other colonies, East and West New Jersey, had been established: the former consisted of a mixed population of Dutch and English; the latter was chiefly inhabited by English settlers of the society of Friends, many of whom had fixed their abode on the opposite side of the river, in what is now Bucks county,

who, with their Jersey neighbours, formed a little community, the chief settlement of which was at Burlington, where they held their general meetings ; below, on the Delaware, including the three lower counties, the inhabitants were chiefly Dutch and Swedes, with a few English ; the whole population of Pennsylvania and Delaware is said to have amounted at that time to about four thousand souls. Old Upland, now Chester, was the only settlement of note in Pennsylvania, and might at most have been called a village. New Castle and Christiana were the chief places in Delaware, the former chiefly inhabited by Dutchmen, the latter by Swedes.

In this situation William Penn found these middle states. The old English colonies, in the mean time, had considerably increased, and new ones had been added to their number. Maryland we have already spoken of. New England was now divided into five separate governments ; New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, the Old Plymouth Colony, Rhode Island, with Providence Plantations and Connecticut. These five provinces flourished under their charter governments, of which the crown, in vain, endeavoured to deprive them. Boston was, at that time, the principal town in the British settlements, and the seat of American literature and science. New England had already produced many interesting works, which now throw considerable light on the history of that country.

To the south of Virginia, a new colony, Carolina, had been founded ; Charles Town (as it was then called)* was just starting into existence. It was begun to be built in 1680. North Carolina was not erected into a separate colony. Virginia was advancing, but with slow steps. The French settlements in Canada and Acadia progressed very little. The wars in which the ambition of Louis XIV. kept him constantly engaged, left him but little leisure to attend to his American possessions. The Spaniards in Florida remained in the same state in which they were fifty years before. Every thing seemed to portend that Great Britain one day would

* During the revolution, her name was changed into *Charleston*.

expel the French from the northern part of the continent, and that all the country to the Mississippi, and perhaps far beyond it, would be finally in her possession or that of her descendants. In less than ten years afterwards, Port Royal in Acadia was taken, and Quebec narrowly escaped being captured by a force from New England under the command of Sir William Phipps. But the time was not yet come that was to bring about the great changes that took place since.

In this same year, while William Penn was laying the foundation of his colony of Pennsylvania, La Salle was descending the Mississippi to its mouth, which he found to empty itself in the Gulf of Mexico.

* * * * *

We will now leave William Penn in the possession of his newly acquired dominions; we will let him build Philadelphia, establish wholesome laws, and lay, by his wisdom, the solid foundations of this great state. Another period of fifty years must be suffered to elapse, which brings us to the year 1732. The great founder is now no more, but the excellence of his institutions has produced astonishing results. Before we come to describe the state of this flourishing colony, we must take a cursory view of the situation of the whole northern continent at this time.

Spain, in order to check the advances of the English colony of Carolina, had erected Fort Pensacola on the western coast of Florida; otherwise her settlements in those parts did not show any remarkable increase. France, by the treaty of Utrecht, had ceded her province of Acadia to Great Britain; but to compensate for it, she had taken possession of the mouth of the Mississippi, and established there her colony of Louisiana. Twelve years had already elapsed since New Orleans had begun to be built, and it was now the seat of the local government. France contemplated nothing less than to surround by a chain of forts, the colonies of Great Britain, and confine them between the ocean and the Alleghany mountains. But her population in Canada was too scanty to carry into effect such a gigantic project. She could, and she did build forts, but she wanted a

hardy yeomanry to defend the country that those bulwarks were intended to secure. She relied upon her military power, on the friendship of the Indians, which she had taken pains to cultivate, not without success, and above all, on the disjointed state of the colonies of her great rival, to whom the jealousy of the mother country denied the means of uniting for their common defence. She had calculated rightly ; and those colonies, for a time, were in great danger. If it had not been for the genius of the elder Pitt, and the weakness and corruption of the government of Louis XV. it is difficult to say what consequences might not have ensued.

The British colonies in the mean time had experienced a gradual increase. There was no addition to them but Nova Scotia in the north, and North Carolina in the south, which had been erected into a separate government. The former was little attended to, and the latter was almost in a savage state.* On the other hand the Old Plymouth colony had been united to that of Massachusetts Bay, and East and West New Jersey, having been ceded to the king by their proprietaries, were in like manner united into one province under a royal government.

But the progress of those colonies was slow, compared to that of Pennsylvania. Village ambition had separated the lower counties on Delaware from the main province, with which they had been wisely united by William Penn under the same legislature ; that did not, however, check her astonishing prosperity. She was the youngest of all the British colonies, for Georgia was not yet planted : she, nevertheless, surpassed them all. An anonymous writer, quoted by Anderson in his History of Commerce, gives a lively description of her moral and political situation at this time. On the subject

* See the history of the dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina, run in the year 1728. MS. in the library of the American Philosophical Society ; ascribed to Dr William Byrd, one of the commissioners on the part of Virginia. Yet North Carolina was the first part of this continent that was trodden by a British foot. But her growth was checked by the superior advantages of South Carolina and Virginia.

of her commerce, he says that "she employed about six thousand tons of shipping, and built for sale annually two thousand tons more. She shipped to Lisbon great quantities of corn, frequently selling the ships as well as cargoes, and sending the proceeds to England. She received from the Dutch isle of Curaçoa alone from four to six thousand pistoles for provisions and liquors. She had a brisk trade with Surinam, the French part of Hispaniola and the other French sugar islands, whence she had returns of molasses and specie; and from Jamaica she brought back specie chiefly. She traded extensively with Madeira, the Azores and Canaries, and with Spain, Portugal and the Mediterranean." Though we may smile at this day at this pompous description, it is not less certain that it was an immense advance under the then existing circumstances, when it was even agitated in the councils of the mother country whether Pennsylvania should not be deprived of that trade, as opposed to metropolitan interests.

Of her population the same writer observes, "that it exceeded that of Virginia, Maryland and both the Carolinas together, and that she had the finest capital city of all British America." These and other advantages he ascribes to the excellence of her laws, to her kind treatment of the Indians, and to her unlimited toleration of all religions, in proof of which we have only to say, that, in defiance of the violent prejudices that existed at the time, the catholic church of St Joseph, in the city of Philadelphia, was built and opened for divine service in this year, 1732.

I hope I shall be excused, gentlemen, if I dwell here somewhat at length on our own state of Pennsylvania, which at this moment appears towering so high above the rest of her sister colonies. I must detain you a little longer on this, to us, most interesting subject, in order to give you a faint description of the appearance and situation of our beloved city at that early period.

Her population at that time is supposed to have amounted to about ten thousand inhabitants. The buildings parallel to the Delaware must have extended to Fourth street, and pro-

bably beyond it ; history mentions a tavern situate at the corner of Third street at an earlier date. The northern parts of the town were chiefly inhabited by Germans.* The streets were more or less filled with houses, which at that time occupied more ground than they do at present, many of them having large yards and gardens, as well as back buildings ; for the fashion of having kitchens under ground had not yet been adopted : nor, as the city advanced towards the west, were the buildings so compact as they are at present. Christ church existed as it now stands, except the steeple, of which the foundation only was laid. The Presbyterian church in High street, which was called Buttonwood, and was pulled down not many years ago, had existed nearly thirty years, as well as the Swedish church, which was of an older date, and is still standing. The Friends had their meeting houses, but these were plain buildings which did not attract attention. They had also their lovely alms-house in Walnut street, still existing and reminding us of an eastern edifice by the garden in the middle of the area, surrounded with modest but comfortable dwellings. The old Court House in Market street, once called the Great Town House, now in the possession of the watchmen and clerks of the markets, had had more than twenty years' existence ; and the prison, with a work-house annexed to it, was situated at the corner of Third and High streets, to which the markets then extended. The immortal State House was in a course of building, but was not finished until the year 1735. Meanwhile, the legislature of the province held its sittings in private houses. Between the Schuylkill and the improved parts of the town, there were gentlemen's country seats, and tracts of woodland, some of which existed so late as 1777, when the British took possession of our city, and cut down all the trees to serve as fuel for themselves and their army.

* At the time of the revolution, and for some years afterwards, hardly any language but German was heard in the streets north of Mulberry street. The signs on the houses and shops were in that language, as some are yet at this day.

Such was the external appearance of our noble city in the year 1732. Peace and concord reigned within it, under the mild and wise administration of Governor Gordon, who had succeeded Sir William Keith. Our illustrious founder had now been dead fourteen years, but his spirit had not forsaken us. His able and faithful secretary, Logan, still had considerable influence in the affairs of the government. The manners of the people were simple, their morals pure, and literature and science were held in deserved esteem. Men of genius already appeared whose names were destined to go to posterity.

Observe that young man whom you see walking along Second street, his eyes fixed upon the ground and his mind absorbed in contemplation. His name is Anthony Benezet. He is a native of France and a member of the Society of Friends. He resides at Germantown, where his time is devoted to the instruction of youth. Though only nineteen years of age, and though he has been but one year in this country, he is already distinguished for his sincere piety, his Christian humility, and above all, for his ardent desire for the happiness of mankind. He has seen with horror and indignation the effects of slavery at this time existing in Pennsylvania, and is now meditating a plan for the emancipation of the African race. To that important object he will devote the unremitting labours of a long and useful life; he will live to see those labours crowned with success, and after his death his name will long be held in veneration by successive generations: he will be numbered among the benefactors of mankind.

Not far from him you see a plain looking man dressed in a greyish jacket, carrying in one hand a pot of white paint, and in the other a painter's brush. He is a poor glazier by trade, and his name is Thomas Godfrey. Don't trust to his mean appearance, he is one of nature's own nobility. He is a profound mathematician, and for his learning is indebted to himself alone. This evening, after his work is done, he will be studying the *Principia* of the great Newton, for the understanding of which he has taught himself the Latin language, having had no other than the most common school education.

By the mere force of his genius, he has made an improvement in the quadrant commonly used for taking altitudes at sea, which will be adopted by all the maritime nations, and be the means of rendering navigation much easier and safer than it was before. His friend and patron, Logan, has communicated this discovery to a person in London, who, by his neglect, will suffer another to claim and obtain the honour of the invention; so that the improved instrument, which should be called Godfrey's, will be known by the name of Hadley's Quadrant. Americans one day will vindicate the honour of their ingenious countrymen.

Inferior, but not mean geniuses are also to be found in our rising city. I see Nicholas Scull, the geographer, who published the first correct map of Pennsylvania; I see Ralph, who, though he will never reach a very high grade, will, nevertheless, be distinguished in England as a poet, an historian, and a political writer. He was unjustly treated by the illustrious Pope, whose vanity would not suffer the little birds to sing, and showed jealousy when he ought to have bestowed encouragement and kindness. Others of lesser note might be named, who, not wanting in talents, left nothing behind them by which to be remembered by posterity.

But who is he whom I see advancing with a brisk but steady pace, and who seems to be observing every thing as he goes along? His dress is simple, and may even be called plain; yet you can see he is no common man: genius flashes from his eyes, and intelligence beams in his countenance. He is the printer of the Pennsylvania Gazette, at the new printing office, near the market. He came here a poor lad from Boston, his native place, only a few years ago; went to England, where he perfected himself in his trade, then returned here, and after serving some time as a journeyman to one Keimer, and afterwards working in partnership with one Meredith, he has lately set up for himself, and his paper is fast getting the start of the old weekly Mercury, published by Andrew Bradford. The people are pleased with the moral pieces of his composition, with which his columns are frequently enriched. He gives

them excellent advice, as well as in the Almanac which he publishes every year under the title of Poor Richard, the only Almanac, perhaps, that will ever be famed in after times. Young Franklin, for he is no more than twenty-six years old, is very popular among the citizens, and Philadelphia is already indebted to him for some valuable establishments. He has founded a public library, which will increase with time and be an ornament to our city; he has, moreover, collected all the young men of talents that he could find, and with them formed an association for the promotion of useful knowledge, which will last more than forty years under the modest name of the Junto, and afterwards uniting itself with another body of men assembled for a similar purpose, will be known through the world as the American Philosophical Society, of which (though at that time residing in Europe) he will be chosen the first president. So much he has already done: but his career is not run. He will be the first philosopher and statesman of his age—a new but guiltless Prometheus, he will steal the celestial fire and direct the forked lightning at his will. Europe will admire his talents, and shower upon him her scientific and literary laurels. As a statesman and a patriot he will not be less distinguished. At the end of this half century we shall see him full of years and honours, numbered among the greatest men of our country, and his name will be handed down to posterity by the side of those of William Penn and of Washington.

WASHINGTON!—Do you hear the choir of angels celebrating the birth of the future father and deliverer of his native land? He was born in this year (1732). Blessed be the year, blessed be the day; blessed be the time, the season, the hour, the moment which gave that great man to his country and to mankind! But the world is full of his name, and why should I take up your time in prophesying his future glories? Has he not had a Marshall to transmit the memory of his great deeds, in language worthy of his theme, to posterity?

This memorable year also gave birth to David Rittenhouse, another self-taught genius, who will be celebrated as an astro-

nomer, and be an honour to his country. Thus the period I am about to leave was preparing that which was to follow. For this reason I have dwelt longer upon it than on those which preceded it. It was the golden era of Pennsylvania; she seemed then big with the great things that the next half century witnessed. It is time that I should introduce you to those majestic scenes.

* * * * *

No more of those patriarchal times, when the happy colonists, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," passed their innocent lives and pursued "the even tenor" of their homely ways in undisturbed tranquillity and domestic peace. The trumpet of war has sounded—two great and powerful nations have been engaged in mortal combat for the possession of this envied land. Seven years have settled the mighty contest. Canada is conquered; the French are driven beyond the Mississippi; and Great Britain remains the sole mistress of all the country on this side of the father of rivers, including the two Floridas, which she has conquered from Spain, now her only neighbour on this continent. But short is the sunshine which follows this storm. Scarcely has the peace been concluded, scarcely are the rejoicings over on both sides of the Atlantic, than the triumphant mother country, forgetful of the aid which she had received from her children in the late struggle, attempts to fix upon them an iron yoke, and pretends to the right of taxing and ruling them at her will. The colonists remonstrate, they are not heard; they supplicate, their prayers are not listened to; the odious claim is acted upon, resisted, withdrawn, then renewed and again enforced by oppressive laws, supported by fleets and armies. The indignant country flies to arms, kindred blood flows in torrents; at last thirteen colonies, rising in their might, declare themselves, in the face of the world, free and independent states. They find an ally in the country which they lately combated. The war rages during seven years with various success—but the cause of freedom triumphs, and the year 1782, at which we have now

arrived, finds the United States, no longer provinces, on the eve of a glorious peace.

Who could have foreseen these mighty changes at the close of the preceding half century? All the world was then at peace; there was not a breath of discord in America or Europe. England and France had room enough on this continent to found large and powerful empires, and to diffuse among millions yet unborn, that happiness which poets have sung with so much enthusiasm of fabled Arcadia, and which was realized in this remote hemisphere. Alas! it was doomed to last only twenty-five years more, until the year 1756, when discord shook her torches over this happy land, swept peace and quiet away in her rapid course, and left glory in their place.

The year 1782 was indeed a glorious year. The capture of Yorktown, with Lord Cornwallis and his army, in the year preceding, by the allied arms of America and France, had in fact put an end to the war. The British government determine to confine themselves to defensive measures. They evacuate Charleston and Savannah, which they still held, and concentrate their forces within the walls of New York, the only place which they yet retain. Negotiations are opened at Paris for a general peace, which is concluded early in the succeeding year, by which the United States acquire a territory exceeding their most sanguine hopes.

Notwithstanding these disturbances, the population of the country has increased, but nothing in comparison to what it is afterwards to do. A new colony, Georgia, now one of the thirteen states, has been added to those which existed at the close of the last half century, and the United States are estimated to contain three millions of souls. Philadelphia is the capital of the new empire. She at present contains about thirty thousand inhabitants; yet she extends very little on the west beyond Sixth street. Except the noble State House, whence independence was proclaimed, she boasts no remarkable buildings; two only of her churches have steeples; few of her private dwellings are distinguishable from the rest by their

size or their elegance ; notwithstanding her being the seat of the national government, our city still every where has the appearance of primitive equality and republican simplicity. Her manners and mode of living have not changed from what they were under the colonial government.

Shall I describe to you the humble building in which, at that time, were kept the offices of the department of state, then called the department for foreign affairs ? Figure to yourselves an old two story brick house, twelve feet in front by thirty in depth.* On the first floor is one single room, with a small kitchen behind ; above are two little rooms, to which you ascend by a dark narrow winding staircase. In one of those sits the venerable Robert R. Livingston, the head of the department ; in the room adjoining, where the archives of the state are deposited, are his two under secretaries ; below are the clerks, three in number, including a translator of languages. There is the centre of the national diplomacy. There is carried on the correspondence with the sovereigns of Europe and with our ministers abroad. There I have seen most of the heroes and statesmen of that day. Never was so small a house filled with so many great men.

Then was indeed the age of heroes and of statesmen. Were I to attempt to pass them all in review before you, I should far exceed the time that I am allowed to trespass upon your patience. Permit me only to mention a few. There was Washington, towering above the rest, “first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen.”† There was Lafayette, his adopted son, who has justly been named the hero of both worlds. There was Hamilton, the warrior and the statesman ; Steuben, the pupil of Frederick ; Greene, the hero of the south ; Wayne, the beloved son of Pennsylvania ; and many others whom it would be too long to enumerate. Nor must I omit the leaders of the allied army—Rochambeau, Noailles, Viomesnil, Dillon, Biron, Custine, all renowned in arms, some of whom have since unfortunately

* There is an engraving of this building in Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia*.

† Marshall.

fallen victims to the rage of parties in the revolutions of their native country. All or most of these graced our capital at the time I am speaking of. I have met them often in the modest building that I have just described. Marbois was also there, who has deserved to be ranked among the historians of our country.*

But those who most frequently resorted there were the illustrious statesmen who then directed the destinies of our nation; at their head was Morris, whose financial talents more than once saved our country. There also I have seen Jefferson, the patriot and the sage; Madison the wise; Monroe the good; Clinton, Carroll, Lincoln, Ellsworth, Rutledge, Mifflin, and many others whom posterity will remember with gratitude and pride. But, alas! of all those illustrious men, only three are now living, Carroll, Lafayette and Madison; may a kind Providence preserve their valuable lives, long to enjoy the love and the respect of a grateful nation.†

Franklin, Adams, Jay, Izard, Arthur Lee were then in Europe, managing the important affairs of this rising country, and negotiating that peace that placed us for ever among the free and independent powers and sovereigns of the earth. All those great men have disappeared, and left behind them an immortal fame.

Thus we have glanced over, in half centurial periods, the various changes which this country has undergone in the course of one hundred and fifty years, beginning half a century before the landing of William Penn, and ending with the

* M. Barbé de Marbois is well known as the author of an elegant Historical Memoir on Arnold's Conspiracy, and also of a History of Louisiana, and of the cession of that colony by France to the United States, which is no less remarkable for the excellence of its style, than for the truth of the facts that it contains. In both these works he has displayed a strong attachment to this country, where, in the year 1782, he was consul general of France and secretary to the French legation. The Marquis de Marbois is now a peer of France, and first president of the court of accounts, which is analogous to the English court of exchequer. His name is respected over all Europe, and will not be forgotten in America.

† While this sheet is going through the press we hear the melancholy news of the death of the venerable Carroll, *the last of the witnesses*.

close of our revolutionary war. The year 1632 exhibited to us an immense wilderness covered with woods and inhabited by wandering savage tribes, with some handfuls of Frenchmen in Nova Scotia and Canada, and of Englishmen in New England and Virginia, striving to get a footing in the promised land, while the Dutch and the Swedes were preparing to follow their example. Fifty years afterwards the English have dispossessed the Dutch and the Swedes, William Penn founds Pennsylvania, and numerous infant colonies begin to enliven our shores. The next period, 1732, sees these colonies in a flourishing state, though checked by the selfish regulations of the mother country. The last sees them rise in their strength, conquer Canada, and half of Louisiana for Great Britain, and independence for themselves. The United States of America take their place among the powers of the earth.

Fifty years only have elapsed since that glorious period, and the eye can hardly follow the astonishing changes that have taken place within that short space of time. Only a few weeks after the close of the year 1782, Europe and America were pacified and our independence acknowledged by all the world. Four years afterwards a new bond of union was formed between the states under the auspices of Washington, and a national government established, at the head of which that great citizen was chosen to preside. Eight years he steered our national bark, surrounded by rocks and quicksands, in the midst of a dreadful storm which arose from the east and threatened to involve us in desolation and ruin. The success of our revolution, the freedom of our institutions, the beauty and solidity of our new constitutional edifice, and the happiness that we enjoyed under it, had inflamed our late allies with the desire of sharing the benefits we had thus secured. A revolution took place in France, which at first appeared like the harbinger of universal happiness and peace, but the absolute princes of Europe, fearing for their thrones, combined their forces against the new republic, and a war of extermination began, in which Great Britain took part against her ancient rival, and efforts were made by those two formidable powers

to draw us from the honest path of neutrality, which our interest as well as our duty obliged us to follow. Washington stood the first shock, and by his wisdom and prudence averted a war which then appeared inevitable. He was succeeded by Adams, Jefferson and Madison, whose policy was directed to the same end; but at last the storm rose so high that it drew us forcibly into its vortex. National honour, not less than the interest of our citizens, obliged us to declare war against one of the contending powers. But the European nations, after a struggle of twenty years, made peace, and we were left to fight single handed against Great Britain, who, with her allies, had triumphed in the European contest. But, oh! the power of the spirit of freedom and independence! Providence favoured our arms, and a succession of victories by sea and by land, led us to an honourable peace, which we have now enjoyed for eighteen years, and there is no appearance of its being for a long time disturbed.

Amidst these various trials our nation went on prospering at first by her commerce, though constantly interrupted by the lawless violence of the European belligerents; afterwards by her industry. A rich production, cotton, was introduced into our southern states; in the north, manufactures were established. The genius of Clinton began in New York a system of internal improvements, which the other states have followed, and to which the national government lent its aid. Communication was facilitated by roads and canals, and above all, the discovery of the art of steam navigation by our immortal countryman, Fulton, with the aid of our extended coast and noble rivers, brought the most distant parts of this vast union, as it were in contact with each other. Industry discovered mineral riches in almost every part of our country—gold, lead, iron, copper, coal, marble; and we soon learned to discard the aid of foreign capital and rely on the sufficiency of our own. The United States boast at present of being the second commercial nation in the world.

The fruits of these exertions have enabled our government, by the purchase of Louisiana and the Floridas, to extend our

territory far beyond the Mississippi, and even to the shores of the Pacific. Our population has increased fourfold in the course of the last fifty years, and amounts now to thirteen millions of souls. Of course the face of the country has undergone an immense change. Towns, cities, villages, hamlets are rising every where. A new capital, on the banks of the Potomac, is proud of bearing the name of Washington. The west, which, at the close of the last half century, was a vast wilderness, vies with the east in the rapidity of its population and improvement; Cincinnati, its capital, is nearly as populous as Philadelphia was at the end of the revolutionary war, and the state of Ohio, to which it belongs, contains near one million of inhabitants. Such are the effects of human industry, when unshackled by tyrannical laws, and stimulated by the sweets of liberty and self-government.

What greater proof can we give to the world of the excellence of our institutions than this unexampled prosperity? But it is not only at home that its effects are to be traced; we perceive them in every part of the habitable globe.

When we cast our eyes on our own hemisphere, we see this vast continent, which was fifty years ago (except the old thirteen states, whose independence the mother country had not yet acknowledged) under the undisputed dominion of foreign governments; now all from the St Lawrence to Cape Horn, a part of Guiana only excepted, are constituted into free, sovereign and independent states, in the undisturbed enjoyment of all the rights of sovereignty, and in the exercise of diplomatic and commercial intercourse with all nations except Spain, who is sacrificing her interest for the sake of a vain punctilio. All these states have adopted a republican form of government; several on the model, all on the principles of our own. Our continent is spangled with republics as is our banner with stars. One country alone has remained subject to a monarch, whose power, however, is circumscribed by constitutional limits, and checked by a national representation. The British colonies to the north enjoy the same benefits under a liberal administration. Who does not see in all these

the effects of the moral power of American liberty, and the natural consequences of the impulse given by our glorious revolution?

If we turn towards Europe we shall see similar effects produced by the same cause. There, during the last fifty years, the genius of freedom has been pursuing his slow but sure course. France has abjured her ancient despotism and proclaimed the principle of the sovereignty of the people. England, by wise reforms, has revived that principle, and given a blow to her too powerful aristocracy. Greece and Belgium have become independent states under liberal forms of government. Poland, alas! has fallen. Unfortunate Italy has tried in vain to raise once more her noble front, and Spain has again submitted to the yoke she had so gallantly thrown off; but the struggle is not over; Germany, the heart of Europe and the cradle of freedom, is preparing in silence to give the signal of resistance to the efforts of combined monarchs, who seem determined on playing a desperate game, and risking every thing rather than yield a single point to the spirit of this enlightened age. The contest may be of long duration; but its result cannot be doubtful. Europe will be emancipated, and will owe that blessing to our example.

In Asia liberal principles are making their way among the disciples of Mahomet. The periodical press has begun there to propagate knowledge, the mother of freedom. A late treaty with the successor of the Caliphs has opened his Asiatic as well as his European dominions to our commerce, and in the seas of China our navigation is second only to that of one European power, which is Great Britain. In the Indian Ocean we have lately proved, by the merited chastisement of a barbarous people, that every injury to our citizens will be promptly revenged, in whatever part of the world the aggressor may be found.

Africa has felt the force of our arms. Our victorious flag has waved over the walls of Derne, and our nation has been the first to free the Christian flag from a shameful tribute. We have also given the first example of the abolition of the abomi-

nable trade in human flesh that was carried on with that part of the world. On its western coast we have founded a flourishing colony, and opened a place of refuge for the descendants of those sons of Africa, whom avarice has brought unwillingly to our shores.

Thus there is no part of the world that is not full of our labours or of the effects that they have produced. Even in distant Australasia a numerous groupe of islands bearing the proud name of Washington, and separately those of Jefferson, Monroe, Madison, and others of our illustrious citizens, attest the enterprise of our seamen and the science of our circumnavigators, while the zeal of our missionaries has changed a pagan into a Christian island in the bosom of the Pacific ocean.

All this is the work of fifty years, of two generations at most of those three millions of plain farmers, who, in the preceding period, were peaceably cultivating their fields and raising their corn, tobacco and rice for the benefit of a distant country, and who, until they were compelled to declare themselves an independent nation, were unnoticed by, and almost unknown to the rest of the world. Now their fame is extended and their influence felt all over the globe; their voice is heard every where with respect, so that when eight years ago we entered a solemn protest against the interference of any nation of the other hemisphere in the affairs of the independent states of our own, we were not only listened to, but the principle of *non-interference*, which we were the first to promulgate, has been adopted by Europe and has become, in theory at least, a part of her public law; and in a late memorable instance, the monarch of France, with an army at his back, adopting our republican doctrine, has bowed his crowned head before the supremacy of the law and recognized the paramount right of its legitimate organs to decide on contested points of the constitution of his country.

Such is the proud and enviable state in which our country finds itself, and the moral ascendancy which its principles have acquired at the close of the year 1832, only a hundred and fifty years after the epoch that we are met to commemorate. Such have been the mighty changes that have taken place on

this continent in that short space of time. But who can tell what will happen in the course of another century and a half, and what spectacle this part of the world will exhibit in the year 1982? Who can tell what effects the influence of this hemisphere will produce on the other, which will probably remain stationary, while we shall be increasing in population, in power and in riches, when a passage shall have been opened across the isthmus of Panama, and the shores of the Pacific shall be peopled by our descendants? The face of Europe for a thousand years has undergone very little change. France, Britain, Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece have existed during all that time, alternately conquering and conquered; still it is the same Europe with its ancient kingdoms, its ancient divisions and its ancient names; the discoveries of the art of printing and the magnetic needle have improved its civilization and added to its comforts; but nothing that has happened there is to be compared with what has taken place on this continent within the last century, much less with what is reserved for future ages. The mind is lost in the contemplation of what the course of time may produce in this favoured land, and we are at once convinced of the vanity of endeavouring to scrutinize, with an impious ken, the hidden ways of Divine Providence. Let us then confine ourselves to the present time, and since the future is beyond our reach, let us be contented with drawing useful lessons from the past, which I have brought in a short compass to your view. The first half century after the landing of William Penn shows us the advantages that are to be derived from industry and frugality, and the happiness of a country where ambition, luxury and pride are yet unknown. From the second, we learn the vanity of conquests and military glory, since we find that the splendid victories of Great Britain over her French neighbours on this continent, resulted in the loss of her ancient and most valuable colonies. The third, above all the rest, is fraught with instruction of the most important kind; and I cannot better conclude this discourse than by submitting to you a few reflections on this most interesting subject.

The unexampled prosperity which this country has enjoyed

during the last half century, is all owing to the counsels of one man, and to the wisdom of the nation in adopting his maxims and making them the rule of their conduct. You perceive, gentlemen, that I am alluding to the advice contained in that admirable document, the farewell address of George Washington to the people of the United States, by which, no longer in the capacity of their general, of their president, but in that of their father, he bequeathed to them the rich treasures of his prophetic mind and the fruits of his long experience: this he did in the year 1796, only thirteen years after our independence had been acknowledged by Great Britain, and three years before his lamented death. By that political testament he left to us a golden rule for our national guidance, which may be summed up in these few words; "justice to foreign nations and union amongst ourselves." It is to a strict adherence to these maxims that we are indebted for the blessings that we now enjoy. By the observance of the first, we have been raised up to the proud rank that we hold among the nations of the earth; and without wars, without conquests, our territory has been enlarged to such an immense extent as no one would have dreamed of at the close of our revolution: but we could not now boast of these advantages unless we had also adhered to the last and most important rule, the preservation of our holy union. On that every thing has depended and will depend in future. To our union we owe every thing; it has raised us to power and to riches, and it has brought about the prosperous state which our agriculture, manufactures, and commerce have attained, by which we have been enabled to discharge, without effort, the heavy debt which two wars had accumulated upon us, so that we may indulge a good natured smile at other nations, who at this moment are coolly calculating the expense of our republican form of government, and amusing themselves by comparing it with the enormous expenditure of their own.

On the preservation of our union depend all our future prospects. Washington has told us that it is "the main pillar in the edifice of our real independence, the support of our

tranquillity at home, of our peace abroad, of our safety, of our prosperity, of that very liberty which we so highly prize." He has said, moreover, that "no alliances, however strict, between the parts, can be an adequate substitute, and that they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances, in all times, have experienced." He has depicted to us the quarrels, the wars, the bloodshed that would follow from a dissolution of this compact, and the overthrow of our civil liberty, by the large military establishments which such a state of things would necessarily require ; and lastly, he has forewarned us, that "this is the point in our political fortress, against which the batteries of *internal and external enemies* will be most constantly and actively, though often *covertly and insidiously*, directed."*

Such is the language of the greatest man that the world ever produced, and of the truest and most zealous friend that America ever had ; the experience of the last fifty years has proved the soundness of his judgment, and that of the next will, if possible, make it still more manifest, provided we continue to tread in the path of safety, prosperity, honour and glory which he has pointed out to us ; and that we may do so, permit me to conclude in his own words, with his admirable exhortation, that "we may never cease properly to appreciate the benefits of our union ; that we may cherish a cordial, habitual and immovable attachment to it ; accustoming ourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of our political safety and prosperity ; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety ; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned, and *indignantly frowning* upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties that now link together its various parts."

Thus we shall prove ourselves the worthy sons of Washington and of William Penn.

* All these quotations are in the words of Washington, and literally extracted from his farewell address.





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